REMARKS

Rejections under 35 USC §102(b)

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9, 11-13 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Bruening et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,120,443).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "a third step of eluting the PGM from the washing-treated resin to form an effluent, wherein said elution step comprises a step of bringing the washing-treated resin into contact with an aqueous solution of thiourea or hydrochloric acid solution, or with the aqueous solution of thiourea and then the hydrochloric acid solution successively."

In Bruening et al, the aqueous recovery solutions shown in the disclosure are 0.1 M HCl and 5 M NH_4 Cl. Also disclosed in Bruening et al are recovery solution of 1M thiourea plus 0.02M $TiCl_3$ plus 0.1M HCl and another aqueous recovery solution of 4M $(NH_4)_2SO_4$ in Example 9. Also, it discloses 1M thiourea plus 0.1M hypophosphorous acid in Example 11, and 1M thiourea plus 0.1M NaH_2PO_2 plus 0.1M HCl.

However, Bruening et al does not teach or suggest the "third step of eluting the PGM from the washing-treated resin to form an effluent, wherein said elution step comprises a step of bringing the washing-treated resin into contact with an aqueous

solution of thiourea or hydrochloric acid solution, or with the aqueous solution of thiourea and then the hydrochloric acid solution successively."

For at least these reasons, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Bruening et al. Claims 3, 4, 7, 9, 11-13 and 15, directly or indirectly depending from claim 1, also patentably distinguish over Bruening et al for at least the same reasons. Claim 5 has been cancelled making the rejection of the claim moot.

Rejections under 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 2, 6, 10 and 14 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious over Bruening et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,120,443) in view of EP 1,167,555 (EP'555).

Claims 2, 6, 10 and 14, directly or indirectly, depend from claim 1, which patentably distinguishes over Bruening et al.

EP '555 is alleged to disclose matters relevant to ORP of 700 to 1100 mV as in claim 2, and EP '555 is also alleged to disclose that HCl solution has a chloride ion concentration of 4 mol/L or more as in claim 6. Such disclosures, however, do not remedy the deficiencies of Bruening et al discussed above.

For at least these reasons, claims 2 and 6 patentably distinguish over Bruening et al and EP'555. Claim 10, depending from claim 2, and claim 14, depending from claim 6, also patentably distinguish over Bruening et al and EP'555 for at least the same reasons.

Claims 7 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious over Bruening et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,120,443).

Claim 7 has been amended to depend from claim 1, and claim 15 further depends from claim 7. Bruening et al is alleged further to disclose that the temperature is between 60 and 90 °C. Such disclosure, however, does not remedy the deficiencies of Bruening et al discussed above regarding claim 1.

For at least these reasons, claims 7 and 15 patentably distinguish over Bruening et al.

Claims 8 and 16 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious over Bruening et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,120,443) in view of Ji et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,660,059).

Claim 8 depends from claim 1. Ji et al has been cited for allegedly disclosing that elution effluent is made alkaline and then heated to recover the PGM in the form of sulfide. Such disclosure, however, does not remedy the deficiencies of Bruening et al discussed above regarding claim 1.

For at least these reasons, claim 8 patentably distinguish over Bruening et al. Claim16, depending from claim 8, also patentably distinguishes over Bruening et al and Ji et al for at least the same reasons.

New Claims

New claims depending from claim 1 have newly been added to recite the individual elution step.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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